



Report about Gloucestershire: Volunteering



What it is like for disabled people and people with mental health challenges



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What we did

We are Barnwood Trust. We work alongside disabled people and people with a mental health challenge in Gloucestershire.



We want to change things to make life better for people living here.



We think it's really important that we involve and listen to as many people as we can.



In 2021, we sent out a questionnaire to people living in Gloucestershire.

The questionnaire asked people what chances they get in life.

We asked disabled people and people with mental health challenges questions about:



- any training they have done



- working and getting a job



- volunteering. This means helping organisations for free.

Things like helping to run a group or working in a charity shop



- housing



- activities people take part in. Things like social groups, sports or hobbies



260 people answered our questions.



Other people have done **research** about volunteering too.

Research means looking at something to find out more about it.



This report tells you the main things people told us about volunteering.



This report tells you:

- what we found out
- what people said would help
- ideas organisations can think about



What we found out



Only 1 in 3 disabled people can do the volunteering they want to do.



1 in 2 disabled people said that their health makes it hard for them to volunteer.



1 in 2 disabled people said that having more choice would make it easier for them to volunteer. Things like:



- choosing what times and days they work

and



- being able to work from home

Things that stop disabled people from volunteering



A **barrier** is when something stops you or makes it harder for you to do something.



Barriers stop people from having the same chance in life as other people.



We found out about barriers in our research.



These barriers stopped people doing the volunteering they want to do.

What we found out about barriers

The main barriers people told us about are that:



- 1 in 2 disabled people said that their health makes it hard for them to volunteer



- it is hard to get to the places where you can volunteer



- not feeling **confident** enough to volunteer. **Confident** is feeling like you can do something



- needing someone to help and support them to volunteer

What other research found out about barriers

The main barriers that stop disabled people from volunteering are:

- not knowing how long they will be able to volunteer for



- not knowing what volunteering they can do



- people had not thought about doing volunteering before

Other things that stop disabled people from volunteering



Other people have done research about volunteering and disabled people. They found that:



Disabled people were more likely to help friends or family than volunteer with an organisation.

Things like helping someone with their shopping or caring for children



We don't know what stopped people from volunteering with an organisation. It might be because:

- an illness or disability made it hard for them to volunteer



- some places where you can volunteer are not **accessible**.

Accessible means how easy it is for everyone to join in



- they were treated unfairly by other people



1 in 4 disabled people said they didn't think organisations would be able to meet their support needs.



Disabled people are more likely to be worried about how they will be treated.

Things that would help disabled people to volunteer



We asked some disabled people questions about what would help them join in more.



1 in 2 disabled people said that having more choices about volunteering would be helpful.

Things like different start times or being able to work from home.



This means more people would be able to volunteer.



People also told us that these things would help:

- 1 in 3 people said more information about volunteering that is easy to find



- 1 in 3 people said more choice about what volunteering you can do



- 1 in 4 people said having someone to support them to volunteer



- 1 in 4 people said organisations being more **inclusive**.

Inclusive means doing things in a way that means everyone can join in

Our big ideas for the future

From looking at everything people told us, there are 3 big things that organisations in Gloucestershire need to do.



Big thing 1: Keep talking to disabled people and people with mental health challenges

Organisations should:

- ask people what barriers they face and what support they need to take part in volunteering
- use what people say to plan work and make decisions. Make sure people's voices are included





- speak to disabled people who already volunteer. Learn from their experiences



- work together with local groups in the community. Think about how to get more volunteers and how organisations can be more inclusive



- work together with disabled people and people with mental health challenges. Think about how to communicate in ways that work well for everyone



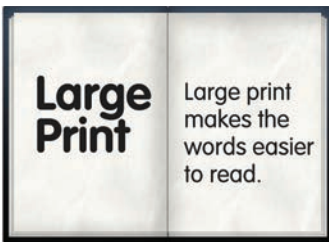
- find out what makes people feel welcome when they start volunteering. Make sure that everyone feels welcome

Big thing 2: Give people clear information that is easy to understand

Organisations that offer volunteering should give information in lots of different ways. Things like:



- easy read information



- large print



- braille and sign language



Organisations should tell people about how they can volunteer in lots of different ways.

Things like:



- holding events where people can come and find out about volunteering



- sharing information online and on paper. Things like leaflets or posters



- joining an online list of places where people can volunteer

Supporting people



Organisations also need to think about:

- how to meet different peoples needs



- how to make sure everyone can take part in volunteering



- making sure places where people volunteer are easy for everyone to get to and get around



- having someone to work alongside new volunteers. This will help people to feel part of the organisation

Big thing 3: Make sure there is lots of choice about volunteering for disabled people



This means having more things to do and making sure more people can take part in volunteering.



Organisations need to:

- look at what volunteering roles they offer. Make sure they offer lots of different roles that work well for people



- think about different ways of working to meet peoples needs.

For example, different start times or working from home

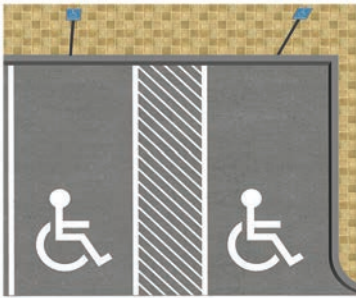


- think about what barriers might stop disabled people from volunteering. This could be things like:



- if there is good transport for people to get to the organisation

and



- if there is disabled parking and paths for wheelchairs

Contact us



If you would like to speak to us about this booklet, please contact Roz at Barnwood Trust.



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